

# Natural Resources and Environmental Science Program 2013-2014 Implementation Plan Report

October 2014

**Background:** The NRES program completed a program review in April 2014, and submitted an Implementation Plan on April 21, 2014. As a result, submission of this first annual Implementation Plan in October 2014, just 6 months after the review, will be necessarily brief.

**Assessment Method:** The method of assessment is the internal program review, coupled with the external review and associated report.

**Results:** The results of the program review are captured by the external committee report, as well as by the NRES Program Review Implementation Plan submitted April 21, 2014.

**Analysis of Results and Reflection:** In April 2014 we carefully reviewed the results of the external review report, and provided our responses ('accept' or 'reject') in the NRES Program Review Implementation Plan submitted April 21, 2014. To summarize, we agreed with most of the recommendations of the committee and have been working to address those suggestions, as summarized below.

## **Ongoing Improvement Actions:**

1. Two key findings of the external review were (1) the need for additional administrative support necessary to implement many of the suggestions made by the external committee, and (2) the need for better office space for the program, specifically for the Academic Coordinator. NRES leaders Mary Arthur (Steering Committee Chair) and Chris Matocha (DUS) have met with Dean Cox on two occasions (July 22<sup>nd</sup> and September 15<sup>th</sup>) to discuss potential options for adding support. Dean Cox and Steve Workman are exploring options for a shared space, and potentially also shared administrative support, for NRES and several other programs. We see these two improvements in support of the program as essential to forward momentum, and will continue to work with CAFE administration to implement them.
2. Recruitment of students was seen as another need of the program, particularly with the addition of the Environment and Sustainability major in the College of Arts and Sciences that creates direct competition with the NRES program. We have increased our activity in this area through several avenues: (a) NRES Academic

Coordinator Geri Philpott spearheaded the first K-Week event highlighting all the 'environmental' undergraduate majors in CAFE; (b) Geri Philpott has attended more recruiting events, including an event sponsored by Bluegrass Greensource for environmental programs; (c) NRES hired a part-time temporary employee to update and 'activate' our social media, including improvements to the NRES webpage, Facebook, Tumblr, Instagram, and LinkedIn, and postings to the Greenhouse LLC webpage. We are assessing the attention captured by these social media efforts to determine the value and need for funding of this effort.

3. Students in the Environmental Science Club conducted a fund-raiser to raise the funds necessary to start an NRES program-specific ledger. The idea is to fundraise for student scholarships of various types, such as funding to attend meetings and to offset the costs of summer camp (NRE 320).
4. The review report highlighted the need to continuously recruit faculty to the program, both from within the existing faculty and through new hires wherein searches are tied to the NRES program in an explicit manner. Since the review, we have recruited Dr. Rebecca McCulley to teach NRE 201, starting in fall 2015. This will relieve Geri Philpott of this teaching commitment, freeing us to create a freshman class, NRE 101, Introduction to Natural Resources and Environmental Science. We hope that the addition of a 100-level NRES course will help with retention, and possibly also with recruitment to the program.